

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SECTO 10068 01 OF 02 081707Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM USDEL SECRETARY IN NEW YORK
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMCONGEN JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SECTO 10068

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS), PBOR, MOPS, MILI, LE, IS, US
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: NEXT STEPS

1. THE LATEST SERIES OF CABLES FROM TEL AVIV, JERUSALEM
AND BEIRUT (TEL AVIV 7698; JERUSALEM 1600; USDAO IR-6-157;
BEIRUT 5043) SUGGESTS A LOGICAL STRATEGY WE MIGHT FOLLOW IN
THE DAYS AHEAD. THE FACT THAT WEIZMAN APPARENTLY HAS NOT
AGREED THAT THERE SHOULD BE BASICALLY TWO PHASES -- THE
FIRST BEING PLO/FATAH WITHDRAWAL AND THE INTRODUCTION OF
LEBANESE ARMY, AND THE SECOND BEING POLITICAL AND MILITARY
DISCUSSIONS ON SUCH ISSUES AS FURTHER WITHDRAWAL OF PLO/
FATAH--IS IMPORTANT. IF THE ISRAELIS COULD BE KEPT TO AN
UNDERSTANDING OF THIS KIND, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE FOR THE PALESTINIAN
WITHDRAWALS AND THE INSERTION OF LEBANESE TROOPS TO TAKE PLACE
AT AN EARLY MOMENT AND IN ADVANCE OF FULL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
THE ISRAELIS AND LEBANESE ON OTHER ISSUES. AT THE SAME
TIME, WE MUST URGE BOTH PARTIES TO MEET EARLIER THAN THE
LEBANESE HAD BEEN THINKING OF (OCTOBER 12). WE

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MIGHT ALSO URGE AT SOME STAGE THE LEBANESE TO INSERT INTO
THEIR DELEGATION ANOTHER REPRESENTATIVE WHO COULD PERHAPS
TALK MORE FREELY ABOUT THE PRAGMATIC UNDERSTANDINGS
THAT MIGHT BE DEVELOPED WITH REGARD TO THE GOOD FENCE AND
THE FATE OF CHRISTIAN MILITIA COMMANDERS. (AMBASSADOR
PARKER HERE IS THINKING ABOUT URGING BOUTROS TO APPOINT
SOMEONE LIKE SAMI KHATIB.) WHILE IN THE END IT WOULD BE BETTER

TO HAVE ISRAELI-LEBANESE MEETINGS WITHOUT UN REPS REPRESENT IF THE ISRAELIS REMAIN ADAMANTLY AGAINST SUCH PARTICIPATION, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD URGE ISRAELI ACQUIESCENCE IN A UN PRESENCE FOR THE MOMENT SINCE THERE CONCEIVABLY COULDBE WAYS IN WHICH UN FORCES COULD BE HELPFUL, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH REGARD TO GOOD FENCE ARRANGEMENTS, AS HINTED IN GENERAL KHOURY'S COMMENTS (USDAO BEIRUT IR 6157 DTG 071743Z). AN ADDED REASON FOR UN PRESENCE IS THAT WE CAN SECURE FROM UN SOURCES A DISPASSIONATE ACCOUNT OF THE MEETINGS. FINALLY, AS AMBASSADOR LEWIS HAS POINTD OUT, WE WANT TO TRY TO GET THE ISRAELIS TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE LIMITS--WHICH WE WOULD DEFEND--TO FORCING ANOTHER SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT DICTATION OVER THE WAY IT DEPLOYS ITS OWN TROOPS WITHIN THE CONFINES OF ITS OWN RECOGNIZED TERRITORY.

2. FOR AMBASSADOR LEWIS: PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS AS SOON AS FEASIBLE WITH WEIZMAN (AND WITH BEGIN AT YOUR DISCRETION):

--WE WELCOME FACT THAT WEIZMAN HAS AGREED WITH US THAT THERE SHOULD BE A TWO-PHASE APPROACH, WITH THE FIRST INVOLVING PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AND THE INTRODUCTION OF LEBANESE ARMY UNITS, AND THE SECOND BEING FURTHER LEBANESE-ISRAELI DISCUSSIONS ON SUCH ISSUES AS A MORE EXTENSIVE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL THE GOOD FENCE, AND FATE OF
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CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. WE ARE COMMUNICATING THIS UNDERSTANDING TO THE LEBANESE IN ADVANCE OF THE NEXT ISRAELI-LEBANESE MEETING. FOR OUR PART, WE CONSIDER IT CRITICALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL COMMENCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SINCE THE LEBANESE HAVE BEEN READY TO SEND IN TROOPS AS EARLY AS OCTOBER 12, IT IS ONLY LOGICAL THAT THE FIRST AGENDA ITEM IN THE NEXT LEBANESE-ISRAELI MEETING BE THE DETAILS OF THE WITHDRAWAL-DEPLOYMENT.

--OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT, AS THE ISRAELIS WISH,LEBANESE UNITS WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO AREAS EVACUATED BY THE PALESTINIANS SIMULTANEOUSLY OR ALMOST IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER IN SOME CASES, AND PERHAPS LATR IN OTHERS. THE LEBANESE, WE BELIEVE, ARE PREPARED TO COMMUNICATE SUCH DETAILS TO THE ISRAELIS IN THE MEETINGS BETWEEN THEM. WE URGE ISRAELIS NOT TO TRY TO FINETUNE EVERY DETAIL OF LEBANESE DEPLOYMENT; THEY WILL NEED SOME DISCRETION IN HOW THEY PRE-POSITION THEIR FORCES TO MOVE INTO AREAS THE PALESTINIANS EVACUATE.

--AS FOR UN REPRESENTATIVES BEING PRESENT AT MEETINGS BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND LEBANESE, THIS IS A MATTER TO BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND THE LEBANESE. OUR VIEW, HOWEVER,

IS THAT UN ATTENDANCE COULD BE USEFUL TO ISRAEL.
FOR ISRAEL'S CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, WE HAVE
RECEIVED HINTS FROM THE LEBANESE THAT THEY MIGHT BE
PREPARED TO LIVE WITH GOOD FENCE GATEWAYS LEFT OPEN
WITH A UN ROLE ON THE LEBANESE SIDE. THIS KIND OF
LEBANESE THINKING, WHICH SHOULD NOT BE MENTIONED TO
THEM, COULD LEAD TO THE PRAGMATIC UNDERSTANDINGS ON
THESE DELICATE ISSUES WE HAVE BEEN URGING THE LEBANESE TO
DEVELOP IN THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS.

--AS FOR WEIZMAN'S REQUEST FOR U.S. ASSURANCES THAT THE
LEBANESE WILL COME TO THE NEXT MEETING AND SAY THAT THE
PLO HAS OR WILL START WITHDRAWING IMMEDIATELY, WE HAVE
FELT ALL ALONG THAT THIS SHOULD BE THE FIRST ORDER OF
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BUSINESS. THE LEBANESE SHOULD PROVIDE THE PROPOSED TIME-
TABLE FOR THE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AND OTHER DETAILS
CONCERNING THE DEPLOYMENT OF LEBANESE TROOPS INTO THE AREA.

--WE AGREE WITH THE ISRAELIS THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT
SHOULD TRY TO GET IN DIRECT TOUCH--POSSIBLY BY RADIO--WITH
THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA COMMANDERS. WE WILL URGE THE LEBANESE
TO DO SO.

--AS FOR ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT SYRIAN
TROOPS WILL BE INTRODUCED IN THE GUISE OF LEBANESE
TROOPS, GENERAL KHOURY HAS ASSURED US BOTH IN WASHINGTON
AND IN BEIRUT ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS THAT THESE ALLEGATIONS
ARE UNTRUE. WE HAVE NO INTELLIGENCE TO CONTRADICT HIS
ASSURANCES.

--WHILE WE APPRECIATE ISRAEL'S CONCERNS OVER THE SITUATION,
THERE ARE PRACTICAL LIMITS TO HOW FAR AND HOW RAPIDLY
ISRAEL CAN PRESS A FRAGILE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO BEHAVE
EXACTLY THE WAY THE ISRAELIS WOULD WISH. TO TAKE A
PRACTICAL EXAMPLE, THE CONFESSIOALLY MIXED DELEGATION WHICH
ATTENDED THE FIRST SESSION WITH THE ISRAELIS WAS DESIGNED
TO AVOID THE IMPRESSION--IF THE FACT OF THE TALKS LEAKED
OUT--THAT IT WAS A DEAL COOKED UP ONLY BETWEEN THE
CHRISTIAN LEADERS IN THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT (KHOURY,
SARKIS AND BOUTROS) AND THE ISRAELIS IN ORDER TO ADVANCE
CHRISTIAN INTERESTS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. WE URGE THE
ISRAELIS TO APPROACH THE NEXT TALKS WITH SOME FOREBEARANCE
FOR LEBANESE PRIDE AND SENSE OF SOVEREIGNTY, RECOGNIZING
THAT SENSITIVE POLITICAL ISSUES WILL HAVE TO BE DECIDED IN
THE END BY THE POLITICIANS IN BEIRUT, AND NOT BY THE EMISSARIES.

--ISRAEL KNOWS THAT THE U.S. HAS A STRONG INTEREST IN
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REINFORCING THE CREDIBILITY AND AUTHORITY OF THE SARKIS
GOVERNMENT. WE ASSUME THAT THE ISRAELIS SHARE THIS

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ACTION SS-25

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O 081621Z OCT 77 ZFF-6
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 SECTO 10068

EXDIS

INTEREST. WE WILL DO OUR BEST, AS WE PROMISED, TO URGE
THE LEBANESE TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WILL MEET
THE PRINCIPAL ISRAELI CONCERNS, BUT THERE MAY BE
PRACTICAL LIMITS.

3. FOR CHARGE LANE: PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH BOUTROS
IF HE IS BACK, OR WITH SARKIS, OR IN YOUR DISCRETION AL-HOSS
OR KHOURY, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR
POINTS:

--THE ISRAELIS HAVE SHARED WITH US SOME OF THEIR IMPRESSIONS
OF THE FIRST LEBANESE-ISRAELI MEETING UNDER ILMAC AUSPICES.
WE BELIEVE THERE ARE RISKS THAT SOME MISUNDERSTANDINGS
COULD BE DEVELOPING AS REGARDS THE RESPECTIVE VIEWS OF
EACH GOVERNMENT ABOUT THE POSITION OF THE OTHER. THE ISRAELIS
ARE PREPARED TO HAVE A SECOND MEETING AS EARLY AS MONDAY,
OCTOBER 10, AND WE BELIEVE THE LEBANESE SHOULD TRY TO MEET
THAT SCHEDULE ALSO INSTEAD OF WAITING UNTIL OCTOBER 12

OR LATER, SO THAT ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS CAN BE CORRECTED.

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--WE ARE URGING THE ISRAELIS TO DEAL WITH FIRST THINGS FIRST IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEBANESE, AND THEY HAVE AGREED THAT THERE COULD BASICALLY BE A TWO-STAGE APPROACH FOR THE TIME BEING. THE FIRST WOULD INVOLVE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE PALESTINIANS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY. IN THE SECOND STAGE, VARIOUS OTHER POLITICAL-MILITARY ISSUES MIGHT BE EXAMINED IN THE ISRAELI-LEBANESE MEETINGS. ISRAEL AT THIS TIME APPEARS KEENLY INTERESTED IN GETTING THE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL STARTED, AND THIS FITS IN WITH LEBANESE OBJECTIVES ALSO.

--WHILE THE FIRST MEETING MAY HAVE BEEN INCONCLUSIVE, WE URGE THE LEBANESE TO ARRIVE FOR THE SECOND WITH DETAILS ON THE TIMING, LOGISTICS, AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS PERTAINING TO THE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AND INTRODUCTION OF LEBANESE TROOPS. FOR OUR PART, WE WILL URGE THE ISRAELIS TO ACCORD THIS MATTER TOP PRIORITY IN THE MEETING.

--THE ISRAELIS APPEAR PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT LEBANESE ARMY UNITS WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE AREA IN ADVANCE OF THE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL. IN OUR OPINION, THIS IS A MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE LEBANESE POSITION AS WE KNOW IT, AND THE LEBANESE SHOULD CORRECT THIS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS.

--THE ISRAELIS SAY THEY DO NOT WANT UN REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT IN THESE MEETINGS. THIS IS BASICALLY AN ISSUE FOR THE ISRAELIS AND LEBANESE TO WORK OUT, BUT WE NOTE THERE IS PRECEDENT IN EARLIER ILMAC MEETINGS FOR UN OFFICERS TO WITHDRAW WHEN SUBSTANTIVE TALKS TAKE PLACE.

--THE ISRAELIS ARE NOW INDICATING THAT THEY MAY NOT BE
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ABLE TO CONTROL THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS IN EVERY RESPECT DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT AND HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE LEBANESE TRY TO GET IN DIRECT TOUCH WITH HADDAD. AT SOME STAGE, WE ALSO FEEL THIS WILL BE DESIRABLE AND UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS A RADIO LINK IN THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS WHICH MIGHT BE USED IF LEBANESE GOVERNMENT REPS CANNOT OTHERWISE GET TO

MARJAYUN.

--AT A RELATIVELY EARLY STAGE ALSO, WE HOPE THAT THE LEBANESE DELEGATION COULD BE AUTHORIZED TO COMMUNICATE SOME PRAGMATIC UNDERSTANDINGS TO THE ISRAELIS OVER THE SENSITIVE ISSUES THAT CONCERN THEM, SUCH AS THE GOOD FENCE AND THE FATE OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA COMMANDERS. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THESE ARE MATTERS FOR THE SOVEREIGN DECISION OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. REALISTICALLY, HOWEVER, SOME INFORMAL INDICATION TO THE ISRAELIS OF THE DIRECTION OF LEBANESE THINKING MIGHT ADVANCE PROGRESS ON THE MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF A PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AND THE ASSERTION OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY IN THE SOUTH. (IN THIS CONNECTION, YOU SHOULD MAKE POINT IN PARA 4 OF TEL AVIV 7704, DRAWING IN YOUR DISCRETION ON LEWIS ANALYSIS OF ISRAELIS REACTION IN THAT MESSAGE.)

4. TEL AVIV 7707 WAS RECEIVED AFTER FOREGOING WAS PREPARED. AMBASSADOR LEWIS IS AUTHORIZED TO MAKE POINT TO WEIZMAN, AS RECOMMENDED IN PARA 6 OF TEL AVIV

7707, ABOUT SMALL ADVANCE PARTIES OF LEBANESE ARMY MOVING INTO CERTAIN AREAS IN THE SOUTH. AT SAME TIME LANE SHOULD SOUND OUT LEBANESE ON OBTAINING ASSURANCE ABOUT NO FURTHER MOVEMENTS AS SUGGESTED BY LEWIS.

5. FOR TEL AVIV: ONE FURTHER AFTERTHOUGHT. YOU SHOULD TELL WEIZMAN IT WILL HELP US HELP LEBANESE KEEP SECRET

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OPEN QUESTION OF THE GOOD FENCE FOR DISCUSSION IF ISRAELIS WOULD STOP TALKING PUBLICLY ABOUT IT, AS WE ARE ASKING LEBANESE TO DO. FINALLY, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT HABIB SPOKE TO DINITZ THIS MORNING, AND ASKED HIM TO SPEAK TO DAYAN, ABOUT THE NEED FOR WEIZMAN TO BE MORE SENSITIVE TO LEBANESE POLITICAL PROBLEMS, TO STOP CROWDING THE LEBANESE, AND TO TAKE MATTERS STEP-BY-STEP IN ILMAC MEETINGS FOCUSING INITIALLY ON WITHDRAWAL AND DEPLOYMENT MATTERS WHILE LEAVING MORE SENSITIVE POLITICAL QUESTIONS UNTIL LATER.
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